

The Shepherd Concept

Scripture: Acts 20:28 "Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.

Introduction:

1. Does anyone in here have sheep?
-Or Raised sheep?
-Is anyone a real shepherd?
-Do you know one?
2. The reason I ask is, that the bible uses the idea of a shepherd more than 500 times.
3. If God mentions something 500 times in scripture should that get our attention? SURE!
4. Both the line and work of Christ for all practical purposes began with a shepherd boy named David in a sheep pen and carries through until Jesus himself is declared the great shepherd.
5. I didn't have sheep growing up, but I did have cows.

Now, one of the first things a person learns about working with cows is that it's a lot of work and if your hearts not in it, well you probably better pick something else to do.

I have spent many a cold winter night feeding cows, breaking ice on the pond, pulling calves and tending to sick cows. And those Hot summer days working cows, vaccinating, dehorning, fly spray, and putting ear tags in their ears.

Many nights worried, I've walked fence lines and went searching for lost cows. I can tell you with every inch of my being that I cared about those animals and have put myself in harms way more than once for them. They needed me and I was there for them constantly.

I even had a few favorites that I had many a lengthy discussion with. Their great they never tell your secrets or judge you.

TS I thought it would be good today to try and explain the concept of shepherding. In a few weeks we will be putting forth the names of men as recommendations for future shepherds of this church. So one of the tools we as the congregation will need is the ability to identify shepherds. We certainly wouldn't want to, for example, make a dentist into a veterinarian if you see what I mean. This sermon will also serve as a reminder to our current shepherds.

Lesson: Shepherds Are:

I. Men of integrity

- He worked when no-one was watching
- He gave it all he had
 - Didn't settle for meritocracy
- Sheep out in the pen can't make a report saying he is not treating us good.
 - But this doesn't matter he still does his job right.
 - *Its been said that the character of a man can be determined by the decisions he makes when no-one is watching.
- They are open and honest
- They follow the shepherd pattern of God
 - Psalms 78:72 So he (God) shepherded them according to the integrity of his heart And guided them with his skillful hands.

II. Men who have a flock

- In 1 Samuel 16:11 Samuel went out to anoint David King of Israel
 - Found tending flock
- David's began as a shepherd of sheep
- God wanted him to shepherd people
- The flock of Israel was drawn to him
 - Even before he was appointed King
- In other words, he was already doing the job
- We must look for men who smell like sheep
 - To use Lynn Anderson's phrase.

III. Men committed to God

- Lets look again to David's example
 - Think of the shepherd boy David, who would become the king of Israel.
 - He got real close to God out tending the sheep.
 - He wrote songs of praise and worshiped God with every ounce of his beingto the point that God said,
 - He was a man after his own heart. Acts 13.22
 - Why did God say this about David?.....
 - At least partly because he cared so deeply for the sheep.
- *Shepherds lay themselves bare before God and submitted to his will
- *They have a passion for praise, prayer, and bible study
- YOU say David had problems....who doesn't
- Shepherds have a track record:
 - Being patient-Loving-Caring
 - And staying on course
- Men committed to prayer and God's leadership in their lives.

Cont. Shepherds Are:

IV. Men that know the sheep

- They know each sheep individually
- You will probably never know how many hours your name has been talked about and prayed over by our shepherds.
- Relationships are high on their list
- He nurtures in himself, as a shepherd, the qualities that will help relationships grow, such as:
 - Availability
 - Hospitality
 - Genuine care
 - Commitment to
 - And trust

V. Men that watch the flock carefully

- Hebrews 13:17 “Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you.”
- They help watch over our souls. WOW!
- They are attentive to our needs individually and as a whole
 - Their always watching, examining the sheep often
- They also searches diligently for stray
 - Because sheep have been known to wonder off
- They think about the sheep continually
 - He knows their past struggles
 - He knows their present situations
- They looks ahead for problems
 - Always scanning for pitfalls
 - Ready to warn and protect

VI. Men who are not afraid

- 1 Samuel 17:31-36 David tells King Saul that he can go up against Goliath because while tending the flock he killed the Bears and lions
- Shepherds need to be men who can make decisions based on conviction of scripture, not fear.
 - Confront even if it isn't popular Matt 18
- He puts the flocks interests ahead of his own
- He is willing like our Great Shepherd Jesus in John 10:11 to lay down his life for the sheep.
- *Fear can rule the heart of a man
 - But the shepherd is ruled by God.
 - *They can and many times due face giants, much like David

Cont.
Shepherds Are:

VII. Men with familiar voice

- The sheep know their voice
- John 10:1-5 "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter by the door into the fold of the sheep, but climbs up some other way, he is a thief and a robber. 2 "But he who enters by the door is a shepherd of the sheep. 3 "To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. 4 "When he puts forth all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. 5 "A stranger they simply will not follow, but will flee from him, because they do not know the voice of strangers."
- Shepherds are in the lives of the sheep
- He is no stranger
- Lynn Anderson story of three shepherds who had their flocks grazing together and when it came time to part company all the shepherds had to do was call their sheep and they would all come running.
 - God wants shepherds to be known deeply by the flock

VIII. Men that help the sheep grow

- 1 Peter 5:2 "shepherd (Feed) the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness;"
- He looks at their health
- Makes sure the right nourishment is given to them
- Thinks of ways to help them grow
 - Sets them in motion

IX. Men that look like the Great Shepherd.

- Revelation 7:17 "for the Lamb in the center of the throne will be their shepherd, and will guide them to springs of the water of life; and God will wipe every tear from their eyes."
- Focus not on self
 - ON GOD
 - And on gently guiding God's sheep

Conclusion:

The story is told of a tour guide in the holy land who is talking to the people on his bus about the sacred responsibility of shepherds and right in the middle of his talk they pass a flock of sheep and the man is running around chasing the sheep and throwing rocks at them. Outraged the guide tells the driver to pull over. He goes out to the man and chews him out, explaining that he is trying to communicate the importance of shepherds to these people and here you are chasing these sheep. Its just outrageous.....The man looked at him funny and said I'm the butcher.

Shepherds lead the flock

- Not cowboys driving it
- Not CEO'S or Board members
- Not Lords or Sheriffs either

*Certainly not butchers

*But Servants, men with towels in there hands like Jesus in John chap. 13:4-5